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DIRECTORATE OF
INTELLIGENCE

MEMORANDUM

The Situation in Vietnam

ARMY review(s) completed.

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Information as of 1600
3 May 1967

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HIGHLIGHTS

Significant fighting occurred in widely separated areas of South Vietnam on 2 May. ARVN forces reportedly killed 150 Communist soldiers near Hue and elements of the US 9th Infantry Division operating in the Mekong Delta engaged a Viet Cong battalion in heavy combat.

I. The Military Situation in South Vietnam:

More than 150 enemy soldiers have been killed near Hue by South Vietnamese forces (Paras. 1-3). US forces killed nearly 200 Viet Cong in a heavy battle 40 miles southwest of Saigon in the Mekong Delta province of Dinh Tuong (Paras. 4-5). Communist forces in the central highlands may have altered their offensive tactics (Paras. 6-7). The weekly review of South Vietnam battle statistics (Para. 8).

II. Political Developments in South Vietnam:

The Constituent Assembly has commenced debate on the draft of the presidential election law and appears to be making good progress (Paras. 1-4). A meeting on 2 May between representatives of the dissident montagnard independence movement, FULRO, and the GVN has ended on a confident note (Paras. 5-6). With the issue of third country workers in South Vietnam threatening to become a heated one in labor circles, the government is taking preventive measures to reduce its potency (Para. 7).

III. Military Developments in North Vietnam:

USAF planes attacked the MIG base at Hoa Lac for the fourth time on 3 May, but no bomb damage assessment is yet available (Paras. 1-2).

IV. Other Communist Military Developments:

Peking claims US fighters on 2 May violated Chinese airspace and "dropped bombs" (Paras. 1-4).

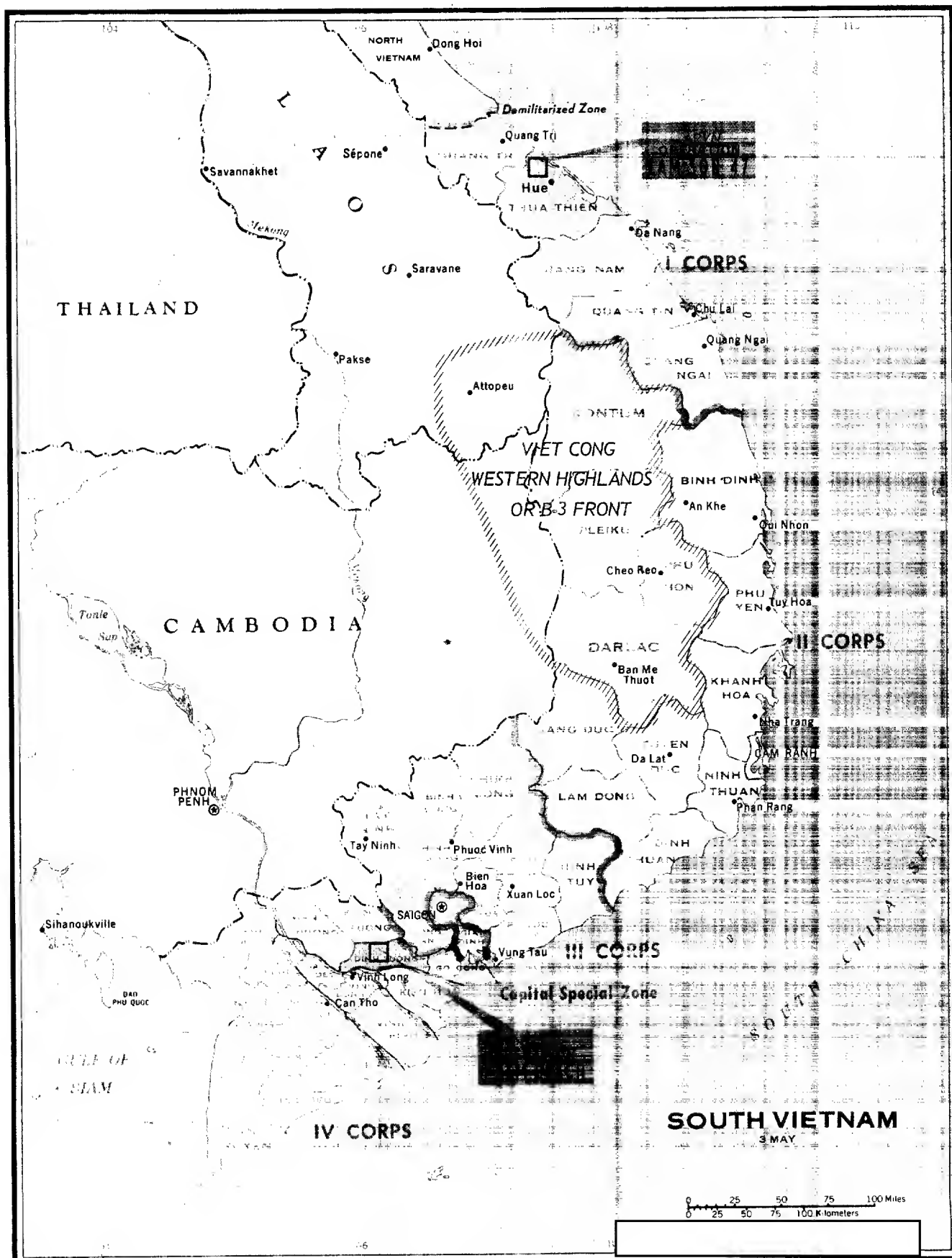
V. Communist Political Developments: Chinese propaganda commentary on the alleged US violation of Chinese airspace on 2 May seems aimed at deterring US air activity near its border and impressing the Vietnamese with Peking's active support of the DRV's war effort (Paras. 1-2).

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ANNEX:

South Vietnam Battle Statistics
1963 to week of 23-29 April 1967
-Weapons and Personnel Losses
-Viêt Cong Attacks and Incidents

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I. THE MILITARY SITUATION IN SOUTH VIETNAM

South Vietnamese Success in Thua Thien Province

1. In the coastal area of northern Thua Thien Province near Hue, South Vietnamese Army and airborne units of Operation LAM SON 47, supported by armored vehicles, killed more than 150 Communist soldiers in a two-hour battle on 2 May. Friendly losses were reported as six killed and 42 wounded.

2. The city of Hue has been under heavy pressure in recent months from Communist attacks on roads, bridges, outposts, and Revolutionary Development teams. Though successful, this encounter with a battalion-size enemy force only five miles from Hue indicates again the threat that exists to Thua Thien Province and its capital.

25X1 3. [REDACTED] recently stated that an attack on the city is "100-percent certain." The chief suspects the attack will take place on Hue's southern edge and will involve as many as five enemy companies.

Heavy Communist Losses in the Delta

4. Two battalions of the US 9th Infantry Division participating in Operation PALM BEACH in the Mekong Delta province of Dinh Tuong engaged a Viet Cong battalion in heavy combat on 2 May. The enemy unit--identified as the 514th Viet Cong Battalion--sustained a large number of casualties as it attempted to counter the attacking US force. Preliminary reports indicate nearly 200 enemy soldiers have been killed in contrast to US casualties of 18 killed and 46 wounded.

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5. This portion of Dinh Tuong Province--some 40 miles southwest of Saigon--has long been known as a major Viet Cong stronghold in the delta. For this reason, PALM BEACH was initiated on 6 January to sweep the northern section of the province in search of Communist forces and installations. Prior to this engagement, only light and sporadic contact with enemy units had been reported.

Enemy Tactics in the Central Highlands

6. There is new evidence that enemy units in the central highlands intend to employ "economy-of-force" tactics, avoiding large-scale conventional infantry engagements. During 1966, many Communist attacks on allied landing zones, fire-support bases, and outposts in this area were characterized by mortar and artillery shelling, followed by infantry assaults. Now, however, according to a [redacted] who rallied in Kontum Province on 1 April, while the mortar and artillery attacks will continue, the mission of the infantry is to protect the withdrawal of the artillery units--rather than to assault the objective.

7. [redacted] states that this change in tactics was directed by Communist commanders sometime after a high-level meeting that took place at the Viet Cong "Western Highlands," or "B-3 Front," headquarters in October 1966. US military officers point out that there is some evidence to confirm the change: since early February, when North Vietnamese forces moved back into South Vietnam from rest havens in Cambodia, mortar attacks on US bases and other allied installations have been the predominant method of attack. The possibility of large-scale offensive activity by the "B-3 front" [redacted] in the central highlands during the summer monsoon season cannot be excluded, however, on the basis [redacted]

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Weekly Review of South Vietnam Battle Statistics

8. The week of 23-29 April compared with the week of 16-22 April:

I. Viet Cong Incidents

	<u>16-22 April</u>	<u>23-29 April</u>
Attacks	35	26
Battalion or larger.....	0	0
Small Unit.....	35	26
Harassment	472	393
Terrorism	55	27
Sabotage	16	20
Propaganda	21	8
Antiaircraft	<u>258</u>	<u>314</u>
TOTAL INCIDENTS	857	788

II. Casualties

	<u>VC/NVA</u>		<u>GVN</u>	
	<u>16-22 Apr</u>	<u>23-29 Apr</u>	<u>16-22 Apr</u>	<u>23-29 Apr</u>
Killed	1,081	1,152	228	76
Wounded	-----	-----	499	311
Missing/ Captured	-----	-----	<u>29</u>	<u>9</u>
TOTALS	1,081	1,152	756	396

	<u>US</u>		<u>FREE WORLD</u>	
	<u>16-22 Apr</u>	<u>23-29 Apr</u>	<u>16-22 Apr</u>	<u>23-29 Apr</u>
Killed	148	181	9	4
Wounded	1,031	957	2	9
Missing/ Captured	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
TOTALS	1,179	1,138	11	13

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III. Weapons Captured

	VC/NVA		GVN	
	<u>16-22 Apr</u>	<u>23-29 Apr</u>	<u>16-22 Apr</u>	<u>23-29 Apr</u>
Individual	338	Not	223	19
Crew-Served	<u>28</u>	Reported	<u>3</u>	<u>0</u>
TOTALS	366		226	19

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II. POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS IN SOUTH VIETNAM

1. The Constituent Assembly on 29 April and 2 May continued to debate the revised committee draft of the presidential electoral law. To date, the assembly has taken action on the first ten of the 44 articles in the draft.

2. The debate has proceeded in a fairly smooth manner with only a small amount of controversy developing over Articles 2 and 10, which deal, respectively, with the date of the presidential election and the qualifications of a candidate for president. The other articles received only brief attention and were either accepted in toto or were amended to a minor degree.

3. Debate over Article 2 centered on the 1 September date for the election which had been the choice of the Armed Forces Congress and the Directorate. The date finally selected by the assembly was 3 September, a Sunday. There had been earlier indications that the assembly might balk at the 1 September date simply to show that the deputies could not be dictated to by the military.

4. Discussion of Article 10 was largely concerned with curtailing the number of candidates for president and with forestalling the entry of lunatic fringe - type candidates. One system proposed was a nominating system in which one quarter of the assembly's membership--or an equal percentage of the total of provincial and municipal councilors--would have to endorse a potential candidate. Although the exact formula is yet to be decided on, the assembly on 2 May accepted in principle an amendment to the article that would require the "introduction" of presidential and vice presidential candidates by a combination of deputies and provincial councilors.

FULRO-GVN Negotiations

5. Negotiations between Y Bham, leader of the dissident montagnard movement, FULRO, and General Vinh

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Loc, II Corps commander, were concluded after what appears to have been a successful bargaining session. The communiqué issued at the end of the meeting states that FULRO forces will return to the "national ranks" after the government promulgates a special statute dealing with the rights of the mountain peoples. This special statute is to be drawn up by a congress of montagnard tribal leaders, and will probably be the subject of further negotiations. Additionally, Y Bham swore "to cease completely" all acts against the national interest. For its part, the GVN agreed to continue its efforts to improve the material and spiritual life of the montagnards. The troublesome issues of a separate armed force for FULRO and the right of the montagnards to receive direct aid from the US appear to have been side-stepped for the moment. The communiqué must still be approved by Premier Ky in order to commit the government to convening a congress of montagnard tribal leaders to draft the special statute demanded by Y Bham.

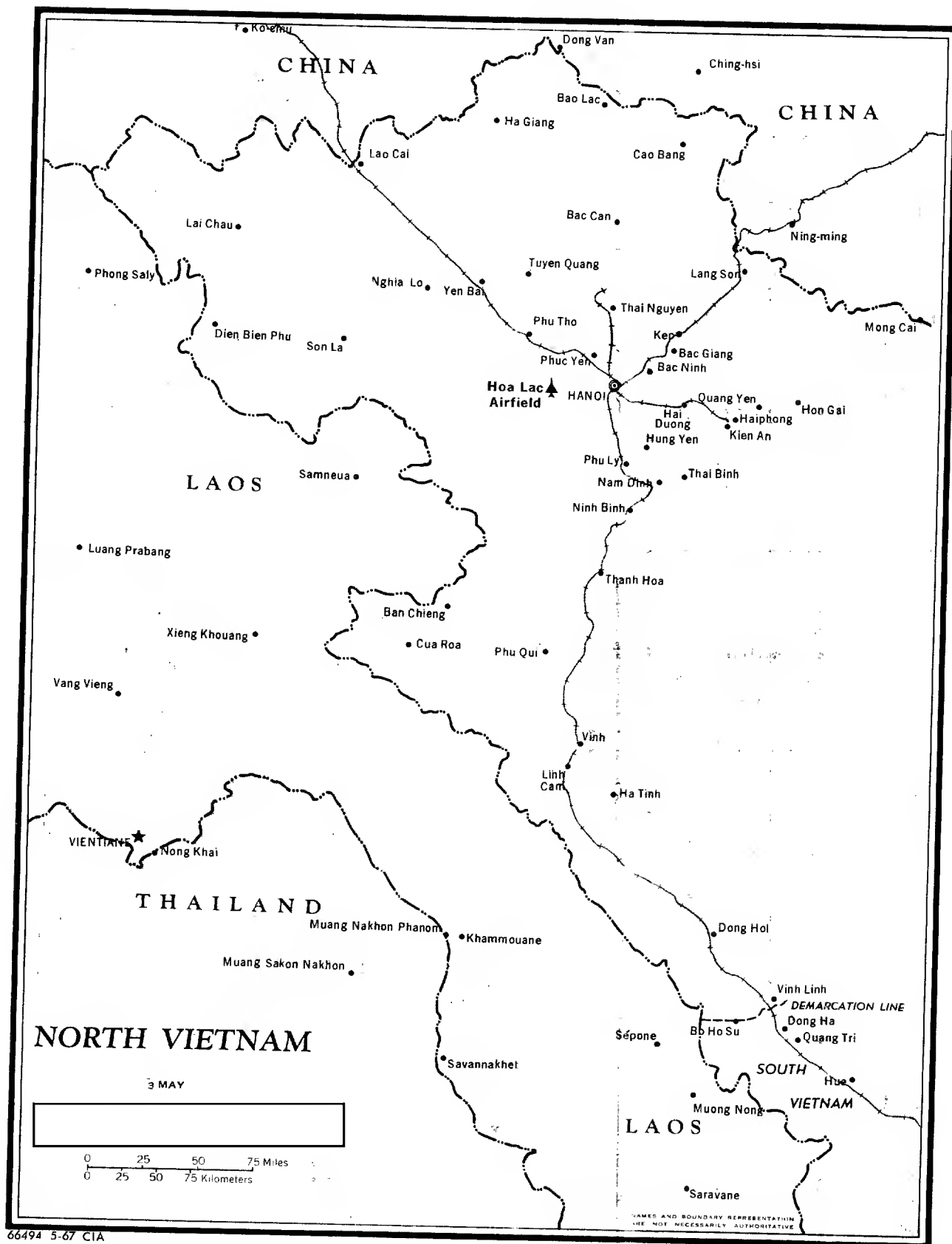
6. The meeting between the representatives of the GVN and FULRO was largely without rancor, although Vinh Loc's demeanor toward the montagnards was observed to be haughty and hardly designed to engender good will. Also, there was no mention of Y Bham's stated desire to seek voluntary exile in Thailand. With the conclusion of these preliminary talks, Y Bham will presumably return to his Cambodian asylum.

Third Country Workers in South Vietnam

7. The May Day rallies in Saigon by several labor organizations brought into the open the sensitive issue of third country workers in South Vietnam--particularly those in the unskilled category. In order to short-circuit potential trouble with organized labor on this issue, the GVN has taken preliminary steps to curtail the influx of such workers. Labor Minister Nguyen Huu Hung has stated that, at his request, the Foreign Ministry has issued instructions to Vietnamese embassies in Taipei, Seoul, and Manila to grant visas to foreign workers only after receiving a clearance from the Labor Ministry.

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III. MILITARY DEVELOPMENTS IN NORTH VIETNAM

1. The Hoa Lac MIG base, 19 miles west of Hanoi, was struck for the fourth time on 3 May by 12 USAF F-105s. Preliminary bomb damage assessment of the previous attacks on 24 April, 28 April, and 1 May had indicated that the field was still usable for DRV fighter operations. Pilot reports of the raid on 3 May suggest that the four to six MIG fighters then at the base were destroyed and that considerable damage was done to the main runway and taxiway.

2. The US strike force was unopposed by Communist fighters or missiles, and was able to silence Hoa Lac's antiaircraft guns with cluster bomb units. Two SAMs were fired at a group of US aircraft orbiting 15 miles southwest of Hanoi to protect the strike force, but all US aircraft returned safely to base.

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IV. OTHER COMMUNIST MILITARY DEVELOPMENTS

1. Peking claimed in a broadcast on 3 May that four US F-105s violated Chinese airspace over southern Kwangsi Province in south China on 2 May. The Chinese broadcast went on to charge that the US aircraft "hurriedly dropped bombs" in the area before being driven off by Chinese MIGs.

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3. Operational reports indicate that at 0856Z on 2 May one flight of four F-105s attacked a target of opportunity through a break in the clouds over a area of northeast North Vietnam about 30 miles from the Chinese border. Another flight of F-105s conducting armed reconnaissance in the northeast sector reported a MIG encounter at 0915Z about 15 miles south of the Chinese border. The US aircraft evaded the pursuing MIGs. The direction of approach of the unidentified enemy aircraft, reported as MIG-17s, was similar to that of the Chinese MIGs in the engagements of 24 April and 1 May.

4. Analysis of this incident is continuing.

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V. COMMUNIST POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS

1. Peking's propaganda attack on the US for the alleged violations of its airspace on 2 May is a measure of its concern over intensified US air operations in northeast North Vietnam. Chinese commentary on the latest incidents is similar to an earlier People's Daily article that stressed Peking's defensive preparations against such activity, and seems primarily aimed at deterring the US from carrying out air operations near the Chinese border.

2. Chinese propaganda also seems directed toward impressing Hanoi with China's active support of the DRV's war effort and at pointing up Moscow's perfidious role. Peking repeated its standard line that the US, in collusion with the Soviet Union, is attempting to force Hanoi's surrender through bombing. Although the commentary stressed the dangers of the increased US war effort in Vietnam and the possibility of further escalation, it made clear that Peking's primary concern was over its own security and the threat of the war's being "extended to China."

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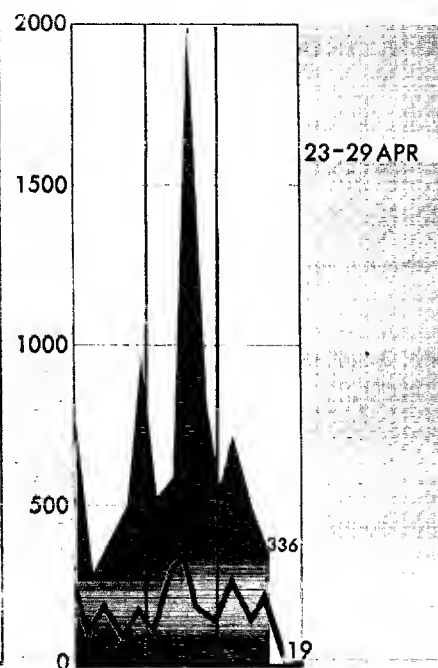
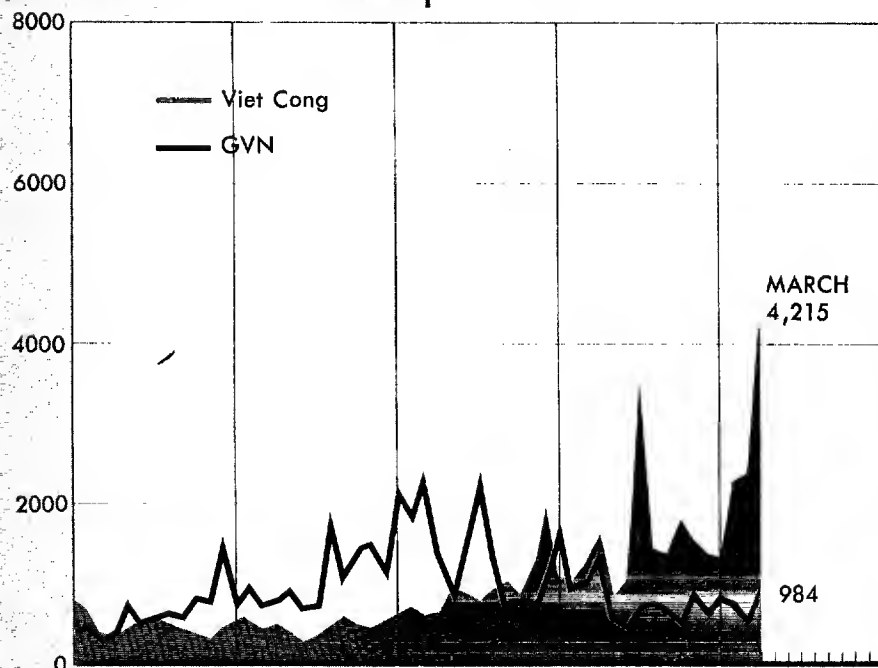
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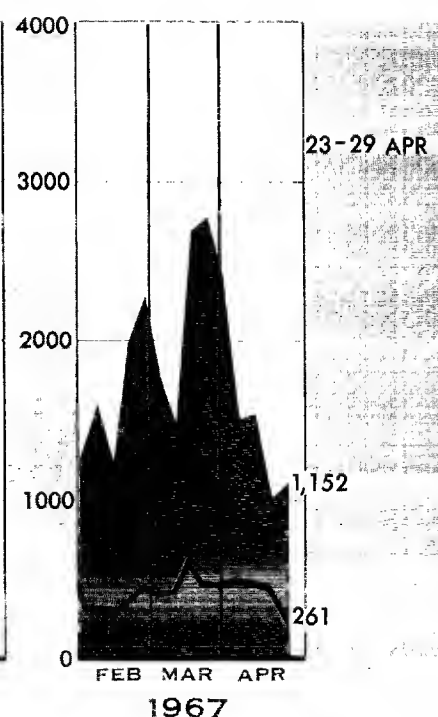
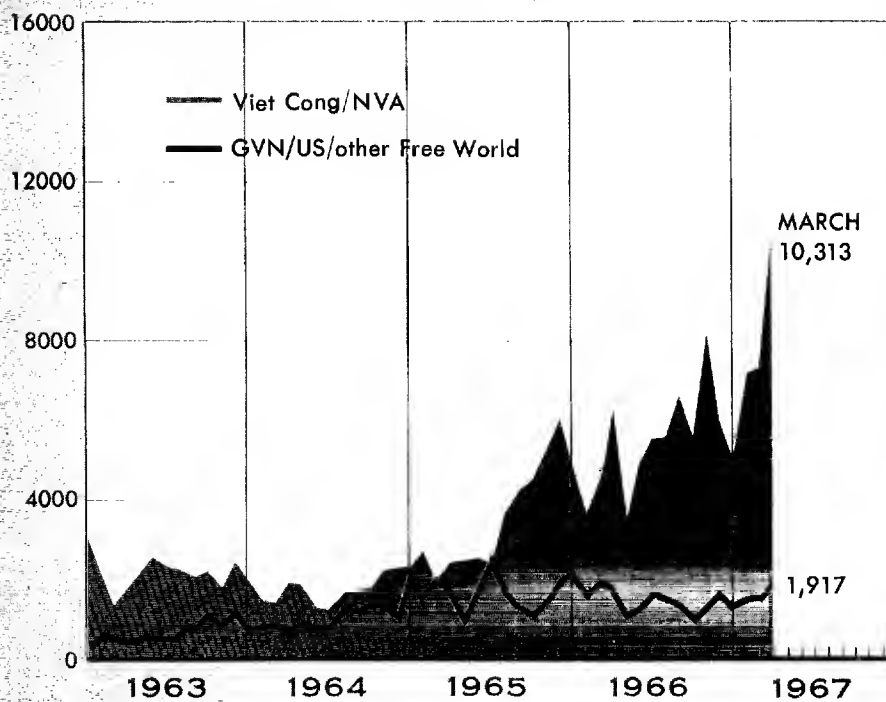
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Weapons Losses

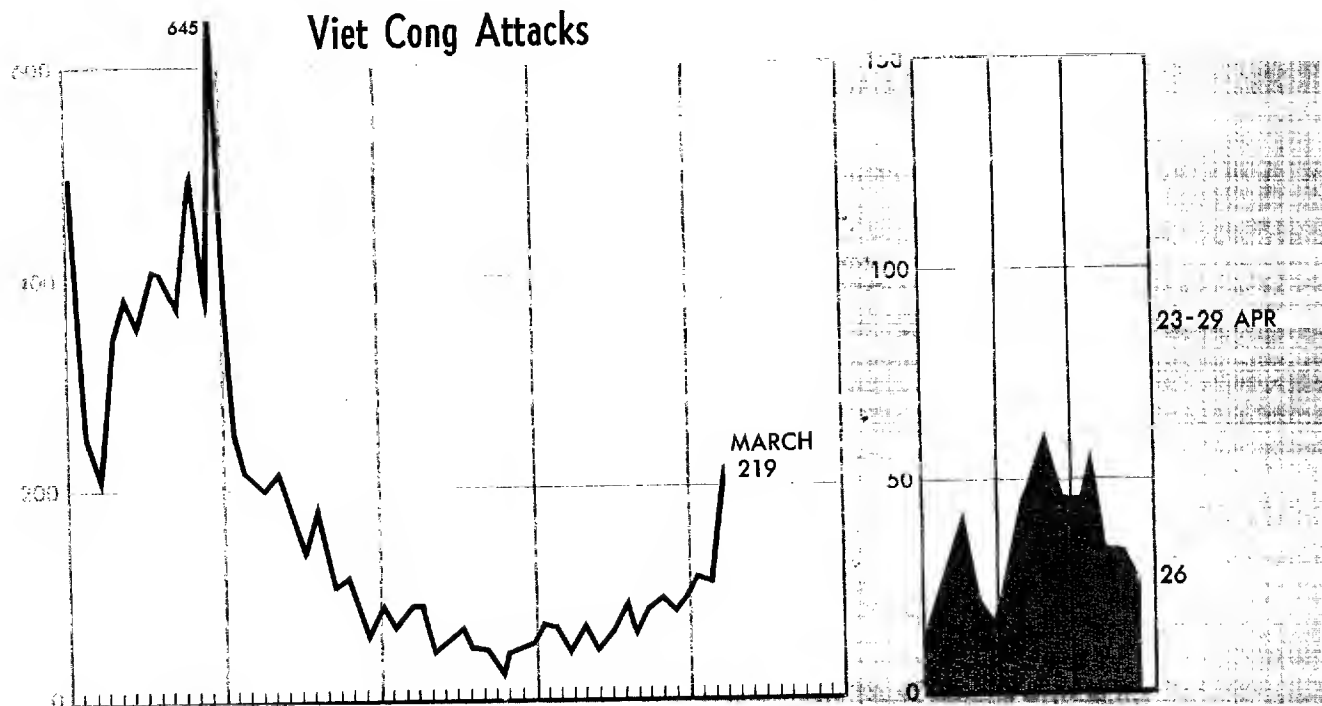


Personnel Losses (Killed only)*

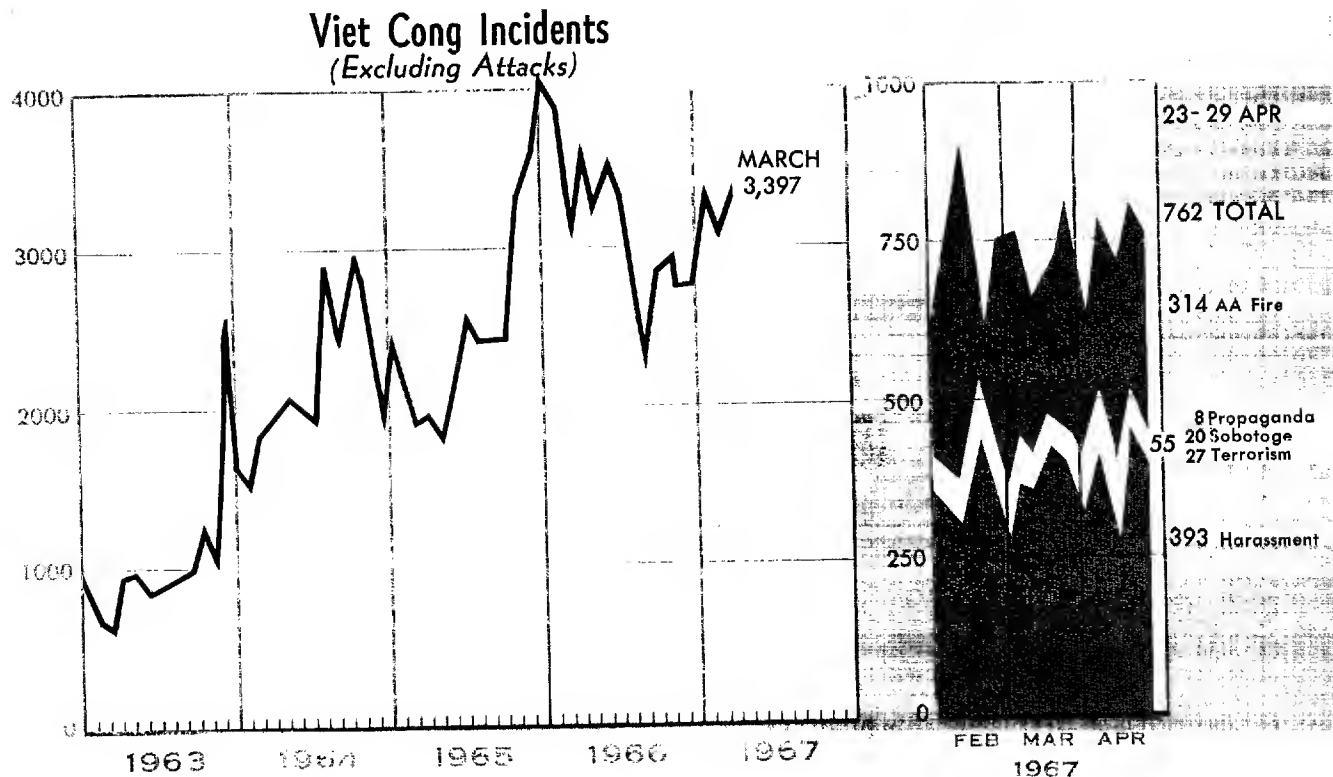


US Casualties to Date: Killed 9,407 Wounded 56,076 Captured 153 Missing 395

*Due to a change in the reporting of personnel losses, beginning 12 February 1967, the weekly figure will represent only personnel killed.



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